



SUPPLIER BUYER EXCHANGE

AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED IN VIRGINIA'S GOVERNMENT PURCHASING PROCESS

New eVA Customer Care Center Opens In Richmond

On January 3, 2006, eVA Customer Care transitioned from CGI-AMS to the e-Procurement Bureau, of the Division of Purchases and Supply, Department of General Services. The new eVA Customer Care is currently located in Richmond, in the Patrick Henry Building and will move in early June to the Oliver Hill Building, also in Richmond.

The eVA Customer Care Team consists of 4 Customer Care Specialists, 1 Customer Care Analyst and a Customer Care Manager. Since January 3, 2006, eVA Customer Care has handled an average of 1379 issues per week and as with any operational start-up, there has been a learning curve. Through constant issue analysis, the team has been working diligently to modify and improve processes and procedures, resulting in a daily improvement to customer inquiries. The team will be adding 4 additional

specialists in the coming weeks, so we can increase the number of live calls and handle them in the most efficient manner. To date, the support from the eVA Buyer and Vendor community has been overwhelming and the eVA Bureau is grateful for Buyer and Vendor patience and understanding during the transition.

eVA Buyers and Vendors have a variety of options for contacting eVA Customer Care. Specialists are on duty from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday to answer live calls. There is a 24 hour voice mail system in place that allows callers to leave messages for billing questions, eVA system assistance and questions regarding Vendor Solicitation and Quick Quote responses. Additionally, Buyers and Vendors can e-mail Customer Care at eVACustomerCare@DGS.Virginia.Gov. There is a 48-72 hours response time to voice mail and e-mail messages, however immediate priority is given to issues effecting active procurements or system down situations. Customer Care Frequently Asked Questions are accessible from the [continued on page 3](#)

VENDOR SCOREBOARD

As of March 21, 2006 the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE) has certified **6,171** small, woman or minority owned (SWAM) businesses including **3,112** small, **1,154** woman-owned and **1,905** minority-owned.

For second quarter fiscal 2006 **13.66%** of the Commonwealth's spending was with DMBE-certified SWAM firms. To see historic reports of SWAM purchasing, go to the DMBE website at www.dmb.virginia.gov and click on "SWAM Purchasing" in the upper navigation bar.

As of March 21, 2006 there were **32,482** firms registered with eVA at www.eva.virginia.gov.

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3RD QUARTER FISCAL 2006 ACTIVITIES REPORT

Selling To The Commonwealth Program Activities
January 2006 through March 2006

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: **723** Supplier requests for assistance
193 Unique businesses helped one-on-one

OUTREACH: **1** Basic workshop, one advanced workshop,
8 Supplier diversity events (six cities)
1,090 Attendees



SUPPLIERBUYEREXCHANGE is a program
of the Virginia Department of
Business Assistance (DBA).

www.dba.virginia.gov

Success Story

FRANK FREEMAN, 3RD GENERATION MANAGER
ROANOKE STAMP & SEAL, ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

NINETY-YEAR OLD STAMP FIRMS SEALS UP STATE BUSINESS WITH eVA TOOLS

Roanoke

Stamp & Seal Company knows the stamp business. Established in 1917, this family-run manufacturer has an impressive heritage and a strong statewide customer base. But even with their longevity, and established market, Roanoke Stamp faces what all small businesses face—gaining ground with new markets.

Frank Freeman, Director of Business Development, a third generation manager with the firm, comments on the importance of developing new business.



"We have seen our customer base change repeatedly over the years and have learned that no matter how busy we get, we have to continually get out there and look for new customers," Freeman explained.

Even though Roanoke Stamp has been successful selling to the Commonwealth, they have run into situations which could have cost them business opportunities.

"Because a rubber stamp is a low cost item which most buyers don't want to spend a lot of time on, we've seen buyers develop comfortable relationships with another supplier. For obvious reasons, they stay with the other company, unless something goes wrong," Freeman explained. "In other instances, we'll contact buyers who aren't aware that we are on the current state contract," Freeman went on. "It's critical that you cultivate public sector customers like any others—constant contact and keeping buyers aware of your capabilities," he said.

A manufacturing firm, Roanoke Stamp makes a full line of rubber stamps and daters, notary and corporate seals, name badges, interior and ADA/Braille signs, banners and plaques. Most products are completed in one day and manufactured on the premises.

Roanoke Stamp has weathered major changes throughout its ninety years in operation. The original company was purchased by Freeman & Via Stamp in 1955. Frank Freeman's grandfather, Francis Freeman and his partner, James Via combined the two companies and retained the Roanoke Stamp name because of its established heritage and larger regional customer base.

Gregory Freeman, Frank's father, joined the company in 1963. There were four employees at the time. The firm continued to grow and was incorporated in 1976. Their 1982 move into the Industrial Park

brought much needed additional manufacturing space. After continued growth and multiple additions over the years, Roanoke Stamp has grown to 40 employees and about 18,500 square feet.

A unique aspect of Roanoke Stamp is that it is one of a handful of companies licensed to manufacture the Xstamper brand pre-inked stamp. "We are the only manufacturer for this product in the mid-Atlantic region," Freeman explains.

Although Roanoke Stamp has relied on history and heritage for the firm's longevity, the company has endured shifts in manufacturing trends, embraced the impact of technology on their industry, and has fought to stay ahead of the competition.

Roanoke Stamp has constantly been working to take advantage of new and emerging technologies. Over time almost all processes except for the actual assembly has come to utilize some type of computer activity. The firm was an early adopter of computerized typesetting (late '70s), computerized engraving (mid '80s), and laser engraving (mid '90s). Currently, Roanoke Stamp has 7 lasers that are used in the manufacturing of many of their signs, seals and stamps.

Freeman, with a BS and ME in Systems Engineering from UVA, worked as an IT consultant prior to joining the company in 2005.

When Freeman learned about doing business on eVA, he saw an opportunity to be proactive with strengthening the firm's presence in the state marketplace. "I have a background in technology and databases and saw tremendous potential with the "free" information on eVA, to use that to our advantage in marketing our services," he said. "It's truly a goldmine," he added.

Freeman is referencing a valuable "spend history" tool, available on the eVA site, which can bring to light, the existing buyers of a particular product

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Frank Freeman

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or service. "Not only do you uncover the buying agencies, you find the telephone and email contact info." Freeman has used this for a distinct advantage—to approach these buyers and educate them about his firm's history, reliability, and resume of government contracting experience. "I truly believe this has opened new doors for us," Freeman says. "Just like in the private sector, it's all about relationship building," he adds.

"We were able to identify information on the previously existing statewide contract for rubber stamps, followed it to the renewal and re-solicitation phase, and successfully bid for the current contract awarded in 2004," Freeman explained. "All by using the public information housed on the eVA site," he added.

Other state business includes Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), several colleges and universities, and various cities and counties throughout Virginia.

Virginia government represents a subset of Roanoke Stamp's customer base. The bulk of their business is wholesale to office supply companies,

Freeman's advice to other business owners?

"Most of all, use the free information available on the eVA site to help you establish a targeted marketing strategy."

other stamp companies and printers. Most of their customers are East of the Mississippi, but they have customers in all 50 states.

Roanoke Stamp is also certified by the Department of Minority Business Enterprise as a "small" business.

Freeman's advice for other eVA registered suppliers?

"A multi-faceted approach," he says. "Sign up to take the state credit card, take advantage of Virginia's supplier diversity program and get SWAM certified, examine your

NIGP commodity codes carefully and include ALL that apply, keep your supplier profile up to date, especially email addresses. But most of all, use the free information available on the eVA site to help you establish a targeted marketing strategy," he adds.

eVA is essentially a database of state and local government purchasing activity, with directories of purchasing officers, public listings of solicitations and awarded contracts, and other helpful information.

"eVA has allowed me to meet with buyers, show them I understand their purchasing needs, and explain how we can save them money and provide them with a better product, excellent customer service and faster delivery. eVA has really helped us get the attention of our buyers," he said.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 28, 2006

Advanced eVA Session:
Developing an eVA Catalog – Richmond

May 4, 2006

Fairfax County Small Business Commission
Procurement Lecture – Fairfax

May 7-9, 2006

Virginia Minority Supplier Development
Council Business Opportunity Fair – Chantilly

May 9, 2006

Hampton VDOT Vendor Fair – Norfolk

May 17, 2006

Blue Ridge Community College
Small Business Resource Fair – Waynesboro

May 19, 2006

Small Business Resource Day – Richmond

May 24, 2006

Virginia Department of Forestry "Selling To The Commonwealth" Workshop – Charlottesville

May 25, 2006

Loudoun SBDC Procurement Panel – Loudoun

For complete details on business networking events, visit DBA's searchable events calendar at www.dba.virginia.gov. Click the "Events" navigation tab at the top of the home page.

CUSTOMER CARE CENTER continued

eVA Home Page, at www.eva.virginia.gov and when calling the eVA Customer Care help line, at 1-866-289-7367, callers are given the options to listen to system alerts, leave a voice mail, or during normal business hours, speak to a Customer Care Specialist.

Beginning in April, each issue handled by the Customer Care team, will be followed by a customer survey, so that a constant feedback mechanism will be in place. This feedback will drive continuous process improvement efforts and customer service offerings. Computer Based Training modules are being created and will be accessible from the eVA Home Page. This first module released March 31st, provides training for the Vendor Account Maintenance Process.

The mission statement for the new eVA Customer Care team is simply: "To Provide World Class Customer Service to eVA Buyers and Vendors".

Roanoke Stamp & Seal Company WWW.USACUSTOM.COM

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STREET: 25 Madison Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24016
PHONE: 800-542-7454 | FAX: 800-523-7330
EMAIL: vainfo@usacustom.com
WEB: www.usacustom.com/va/

Spotlight on VDC

The Virginia Distribution Center (VDC) functions in a dual mode by acting as buyer and supplier.

Its mission is to save taxpayer funds through the cost avoidance process – a process that has saved VDC customers on average \$11 million annually.

The VDC is the cooperative procurement and distribution center of the Department of General Services' (DGS) Division of Purchases and Supply (DPS). Located in Sandston, Virginia, the VDC performs a variety of functions that are related to providing quality service and products to state agencies, local governments and the political subdivisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The functions performed by the VDC are procurement, customer service, quality assurance, inventory control management, accounting, storing, shipping, and receiving.

The VDC supplies more than 950 items to its customers. The items range from staple dry, frozen, and refrigerated foods, paper products, housekeeping supplies, to paints and flags. The VDC establishes the items it sells and the quality specifications through information obtained from customers during quarterly council meetings.

When reviewing the total amounts sold for each of the following items, the VDC sold:

All Toilet Paper	4,112,816 rolls
All Bath and Bar Towels	327,948 towels
All Trash Can Liners	17,946,075 liners
All Hot Roll Mixes	30,801,108 hot rolls

Out of the 950-plus items the VDC sells, its top five items are single-ply and

two-ply toilet paper, 40x48 extra heavy-duty trash can liners, 50-pound bags of regular hot roll mix and terry towels. In fiscal year 2005, the VDC shipped more than 41 million pounds of product throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The VDC is one of a few state operations that do not receive direct support from tax dollars. The VDC pays for its operational costs by placing a small margin on the products it sells, which is used to pay for expenses like salaries, utilities, products and the loan on the building. The VDC passes all savings on to its customers, because it is structured to break even.

The VDC uses a three-method process to accomplish its cost-avoidance goals. The process is similar to the three legs of a tripod - each one supports the other. The first method in the process is leveraging buying power by aggregating the demand for goods across the Commonwealth.

The second method is accomplished by using efficient freight into and out of the facility. While the DGS/DPS Purchase Management Bureau also leverages buying power using statewide contracts, the VDC can further decrease the cost from vendors by providing a single delivery point. This reduces the vendors' freight costs, which is passed on to customers.

For example, the VDC approached a vendor who had a statewide contract for trash can liners. The vendor was asked if prices would be any lower if they could ship full truckloads straight to the VDC, instead of sporadically throughout the Commonwealth.

After analyzing the information the VDC found the vendor could reduce prices anywhere from 18 percent to 40 percent depending on the product purchased. The VDC also organized a

more efficient way to handle the outbound freight utilizing a contract carrier.

The third method to accomplish cost-avoidance goals involves an on-site quality assurance program, which ensures that products have met the required specifications in conjunction with customers' needs and requests.

Unless the product received is USDA certified or is from a pre-approved product list called the Qualified Products Lists (QPL), the VDC will test the product at least twice before selling the item to customers. During the contract bidding and product evaluation process, the VDC requires each participating vendor to submit a bid sample of their product. The VDC will test the samples to ensure the product has met required specifications. A second test is performed once the first shipment of the product arrives at the VDC warehouse. A case is pulled from the middle of a pallet to make sure that the product sent is the product for which the VDC contracted.

All products are tested on a random ongoing basis after the second test is performed to ensure consistent quality levels are maintained. If the VDC receives a customer complaint regarding a particular product, the VDC will address the issue by testing the product or products in question. Each complaint is addressed as quickly as possible on a case by case basis.

The VDC procurement efforts are conducted by their procurement and quality assurance staff. The procurement staff is managed by the Assistant Director, Tom Daniel, and Procurement Officers, John Rouse and Harold Leach. The quality assurance staff is managed by the Specification Analyst, Craig Smith, and the Senior Laboratory Analyst, Alice Gray. Additionally, the Customer Service Team Leader/Buyer, Jeff Janisko, provides assistance to both functions.

The Virginia

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continued from page 4 Public Procurement Act (VPPA) and the Agency Procurement and Surplus Property Manual (APSPM) provide guidance for all of the VDC procurements. The VDC utilizes the two primary methods of procurement. Long-term contracts constitute about 70 percent of VDC procurements, and spot buys (using the eVA quick-quote system) make up the remaining 30 percent.

While the VDC stocks several seasonal items, most items are stocked year-round.

The VDC has a small amount of administrative purchases, a function conducted by the Facility Manager using a Small Purchase Charge Card.

All suppliers who wish to obtain the specifics about a particular contract should contact the Assistant Director, Tom Daniel, at (804) 328-3234. Tom will provide the information to assist the supplier with contacting the appropriate procurement officer.

What does the state spend on...

Commodity highlight: Laundry and Linen Services (NIGP Code 95405)

KEY CONTACTS FOR LAUNDRY AND LINEN SERVICES (95405)

TOP FIVE BUYERS WITH SPEND HISTORY
MARCH 30, 2005 THRU MARCH 29, 2006

AGENCY	CONTACT	APPROXIMATE NIGP SPEND
Greensville Correctional Center	Richard Riedel richard.riedel@vadoc.virginia.gov	\$465,000
Fluvanna Correctional Center	Cindy Stokes cindy.stokes@vadoc.virginia.gov	\$362,000
Nottoway Correctional Center	Sharon Gilliam sharon.gilliam@vadoc.virginia.gov	\$150,000
Department of Conservation & Recreation	Steven Rusch steven.rusch@dcr.virginia.gov	\$138,000
Lunenburg Correctional Center	Jacqueline Walker jackie.walker@vadoc.virginia.gov	\$132,000
Assorted State Agencies with annual spend below \$132,000	Loretta Vines, DBA loretta.vines@dba.virginia.gov 804-371-0357	\$977,000
Total spend for NIGP 95405		\$2,224,000

HELPFUL RESOURCES

VBIC (VIRGINIA BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER) - GENERAL PROCUREMENT ASSISTANCE

1-866-248-8814

vbic@dba.virginia.gov

Department of Business Assistance (DBA)

"Selling To The Commonwealth"

www.dba.virginia.gov

Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE) - SWAM Certification

(Toll free in Virginia only)

1-800-223-0671

www.dmb.virginia.gov

dmb@dmbe.virginia.gov

eVA

www.eva.virginia.gov

Customer Care:

1-866-289-7367

eVAcustomer@dg.virginia.gov

Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS #)

1-888-814-1435

www.dnb.com

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